



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

Aug. 25, 2021

Dear LEA Head of School,

On March 22, 2019, the US Department of Education (USED) granted the District of Columbia a [waiver](#) for the 2018-19 school year to section 111(b)(2)(i)(I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – the requirement that a state may not assess using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) more than 1 percent of the total number of students in the State. The District's waiver is contingent on a series of requirements at the local education agency (LEA) and state level, including activities designed to do the following:

- Improve implementation of the state's guidelines for participation in alternate assessments;
- Monitor and evaluate training for school staff and IEP teams on the implementation of the state's guidelines; and
- Address disproportionality in the percentage of students participating in alternate assessments, by race, English learner status, and economic disadvantage status.

You are receiving this letter because, based on alternate and general assessment results for the 2018-19 school year, your LEA has been identified as one that exceeded the 1 percent cap on alternate assessment participation. Due to COVID-19, and the subsequent cancellation of statewide testing for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, LEA-specific data from the 2018-19 school year was used to determine which LEAs exceeded the 1 percent cap threshold, and therefore are required to participate in activities outlined in the District's waiver designed to lead to the District no longer exceeding the 1 percent cap. This letter includes details of action steps outlined in the waiver. These activities focus on ensuring quality training on AA-AAAS participation eligibility for your school staff and IEP teams, ensuring LEA oversight in the identification of students for AA-AAAS participation, and ensuring that LEAs address disproportionality in subgroup participation in AA-AAAS. Activities will be managed via the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Quickbase application, which will open to LEA Assessment Managers on **Sept. 8**. This app will contain additional guidance on each activity an LEA must complete. Information about each activity is also below, and a table of all required activities and associated dates and deadlines for the 2021-22 school year can be found on page 3.

During the 2019-20 school year, your LEA participated in and submitted activities to OSSE outlined in the District's waiver. While some of those activities may remain relevant, we ask that you complete and submit new activities that will reflect how your LEA will continue to work towards reducing the 1 percent cap in the 2021-22 school year.

Quality Training on AA-AAAS Participation Eligibility

To certify that your schools and IEP teams receive quality training on student eligibility for alternate assessment participation, the District's waiver requires LEAs to submit their annual training plans to OSSE. This submission will include a calendar of activities, target audiences (e.g., special education coordinators, teachers, related service providers, parents/guardians), training goals, and training materials. OSSE will provide feedback on these plans and monitor training delivery. LEAs will also submit

to OSSE targeted training plans for IEP teams whose identification of students for alternate assessment participation differs from determinations made by the LEA and OSSE (see determination discrepancy report in the **LEA Oversight in the Identification of Students for AA-AAAS Participation** section below).

LEA Action Steps:

- Submit LEA Participation Eligibility Training Plans via the Alternate Assessment Quickbase app **by Sept. 20.**

LEA Oversight in the Identification of Students for AA-AAAS Participation

In order to ensure LEA oversight in the identification of students for alternate assessment participation, the District's waiver requires LEAs to submit to OSSE a process for LEA-level determination of student eligibility prior to advancing an applicant for OSSE review. LEAs will then certify applicants as part of the annual application process, indicating that the LEA agrees with the IEP team determination that the student should be eligible for alternate assessment participation. OSSE will provide to LEAs a discrepancy report between OSSE, the LEA and IEP team determinations, flagging IEP teams whose judgment is inconsistent with state guidance and LEA judgment. LEAs will use this discrepancy report to develop targeted training for those IEP teams. Please see the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Process Memo for the 2021-22 School Year for detailed information about the annual application process.

LEA Action Steps:

- Submit LEA Eligibility Determination Process via the Alternate Assessment Quickbase app **by Oct. 18**
- Submit LEA Certified Roster of Eligible Students via the Alternate Assessment Quickbase app **by Oct. 18.**

Addressing Disproportionality in Subgroup Participation in AA-AAAS

In order to address disproportionality in subgroup participation in alternate assessments, the District's waiver requires LEAs to submit to OSSE a year-long plan for self-study and a final report on the self-study results. OSSE will provide LEAs with a disproportionality report that supports LEAs in analyzing subgroup participation over time to identify trends and decrease disproportionality.

LEA Action Steps:

- Submit LEA Disproportionality Self-Study Plan via the Alternate Assessment Quickbase app **by Oct. 4, 2021.**
- Submit LEA Disproportionality Self-Study Results via the Alternate Assessment Quickbase app **by Oct. 4, 2022.**

As an LEA that was identified as exceeding 1 percent AA-AAAS participation for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, you will also be required to submit an "Exceeding 1 Percent Cap Justification" for the 2021-22 school year. Due to COVID-19, and the subsequent cancellation of statewide testing for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, LEA-specific data from the 2018-19 school year was used to determine which LEAs exceeded the 1 percent cap threshold, and therefore are required to submit justification as to why your LEA exceeded the 1 percent threshold. LEA justifications are required by USED in order for OSSE to apply annually for a state-level waiver.

The following table outlines all activities to be conducted throughout the 2021-22 school year. Activities to be completed by LEAs are in white cells with bold text, while supporting OSSE activities are in gray cells. In the coming weeks OSSE will provide further detailed guidance to LEAs for completing each activity.

Active Category	Deadline	Responsible	Activity	Description
Addressing Disproportionality	Sept. 8, 2021	OSSE	Disproportionality Report	OSSE provides LEAs with a report on disproportionality by subgroup in the percentage of students determined to be eligible for alternate assessments for the 2018-19 school year
Quality in Training	Sept. 20, 2021	LEA	Participation Eligibility Training Plans	LEA Participation Eligibility Training Plans Submitted to OSSE
Addressing Disproportionality	Oct. 4, 2021	LEA	Disproportionality Self-Study Plan	LEA Alternate Assessment Disproportionality Self-Study Plan Submission to OSSE
Quality in Training	Oct. 11, 2021	OSSE	Feedback on Training Plans	OSSE provides feedback on LEA Participation Eligibility Training Plans
Quality in Training	Oct.-Dec., 2021	OSSE	Monitor Training Delivery	OSSE monitors delivery of training outlined in LEA Participation Eligibility Training Plans
Oversight in Identification	Oct. 15, 2021	LEA	LEA Eligibility Determination Process	LEA Eligibility Determination Process Submission to OSSE
Oversight in Identification	Oct. 15, 2021	LEA	LEA Certified Roster of Eligible Students	LEA Certified Roster of Students Determined Eligible for Alternate Assessment Participation Submission to OSSE
Annual Requirement for LEAs that Exceed 1% AA-AAAS Participation	Nov. 5, 2021	LEA	Exceeding 1% Cap Justification	LEA completes and submits justification for exceeding the 1 percent alternate assessment participation in the 2018-19 school year
Oversight in Identification	Feb. 18, 2022	OSSE	Discrepancy Report	OSSE provides LEA with a report of IEP teams flagged for discrepancies between IEP team, LEA, and OSSE eligibility determinations
Quality in Training	May 13, 2022	LEA	Targeted Training Plans for Flagged IEP Teams	LEA Targeted Training Plans for Flagged IEP Teams Submission to OSSE
Addressing Disproportionality	Sep. 5, 2022	OSSE	Disproportionality Report (2 years)	OSSE provides LEAs with a two-year report on disproportionality in the percentage of students determined to be eligible for alternate assessments for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years
Addressing Disproportionality	Oct. 7, 2022	LEA	Disproportionality Self-Study Results	LEA Alternate Assessment Disproportionality Self-Study Results Submission to OSSE

We recognize that sometimes special circumstances lead to an LEA exceeding 1 percent AA-AAAS participation, including a small total student population or cases where the LEA specializes in serving students with disabilities. Through this process, you will have the opportunity to justify why your LEA exceeded 1 percent participation, as well as document that the LEA training and oversight provided are consistent with federal law and OSSE guidance. We look forward to supporting you throughout the process of completing these activities as we partner to reduce the number of LEAs exceeding the one percent threshold.

For questions on activities for LEAs that exceed the 1 percent cap on alternate assessment participation, please contact Michael Craig, Assessment Specialist – Special Populations, at Michael.Craig@dc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, reading "Danielle Branson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Danielle Branson
Director of Assessments